



CHAPTER
FOUR

CITY DESIGN:
THE PLAN'S
UNIFYING THEME



vision 2001
2020

The overall goal of Vision 2001-2020 is to make Roanoke an attractive place for people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels to live, work, shop, and play. This vision requires not only sound social and economic policies but also a strong commitment to excellence in community design and appearance. Simply put, Roanoke must be a beautiful city.

Good design is not optional. The quality of the physical environment – attractive streets, buildings, parks, and open space – has a direct impact on Roanoke's economy, the sustainability of its neighborhoods, and the successful stewardship of its unique natural and cultural resources. The community expects the highest level of excellence in building design, streetscapes, pedestrian amenities, preservation of special places, and enhancement of community distinctiveness.

4.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The City Design element of Vision 2001-2020 seeks to achieve this goal by establishing general design principles to guide future infill, new development, street improvements, and redevelopment of underused sites. City Design recognizes that Roanoke is not uniform in design; rather, the City is comprised of distinct character districts, each with its own set of place-defining characteristics. Design principles associated with each character district are intended to guide future land use and zoning and provide landowners and developers with ideas regarding site development and building decisions.

Region

The City of Roanoke serves as the economic and cultural hub of the largest metropolitan center in southwest Virginia, the Roanoke Valley. The City's image goes beyond its political boundaries; visitors, newcomers, and businesses form their impressions of Roanoke at a regional level. Therefore, it is important to reach across political boundaries to promote sensible development, attractive transportation networks, and good design throughout the Roanoke Valley.

Design principles

- Roanoke should cooperate with its neighbors to protect the scenic beauty of the Roanoke Valley by limiting ridgetop development, preserving important viewsheds, and protecting natural waterways.
- Roanoke should cooperate with its neighbors to mitigate the effects of population growth by supporting cluster development, the preservation of open space, and the development of a multi-modal transportation network throughout the Roanoke Valley.
- Major transportation routes within the Roanoke Valley should be attractively landscaped and designed to minimize disturbance of the natural environment. Gateways and appropriate signage should welcome visitors and newcomers to the Valley.
- Landmarks, parkways, environmental, historic, and cultural tourism attractions should be protected from visual or physical encroachment by incompatible uses.

City

The City of Roanoke owes its distinctiveness to its compact urban form. Intense development is concentrated around Roanoke's downtown and large regional shopping centers, with

density of development generally decreasing as it radiates from the city center. Visual impressions of Roanoke are formed at key entrance points along major transportation routes, with Mill Mountain and the downtown skyline serving as the City's predominant visual landmarks.

Design principles:

- Gateways should be established along major transportation routes leading into the City. Major transportation routes should be attractively landscaped and should include appropriate signage to direct visitors and promote Roanoke's unique attractions.
- Roanoke should have well-defined edges to support an understanding of the City's image and create a clear sense of arrival and departure.
- New development along the City's edges should promote a positive image of the City by respecting natural features, emphasizing high-quality building design, and incorporating appropriate landscaping.



Downtown

Downtown is characterized by a pronounced skyline, pedestrian-friendly streets and a mixture of retail, office, residential, and light industrial uses. Downtown is not confined to the Central Business District, but extends into the Belmont, Gainsboro, and Old Southwest neighborhoods. Downtown streets form an interconnected grid and are designed to accommodate

both vehicular and pedestrian use. Buildings are typically set close to the street and often adjoin each other. Parking is generally concentrated in parking structures or is located to the side or rear of principal buildings.

Design principles:

- Downtown should have a recognizable skyline; tall buildings and maximum site development should be permitted. Buildings should be set close to the street with ground-floor facades that emphasize pedestrian activity.
- Buildings should be designed to accommodate a mixture of uses. Downtown's historic character should be preserved and used to guide new development with the assistance of the Architectural Review Board guidelines.
- Access to and circulation within the downtown should be efficient, convenient, and attractive. Streets should be designed to accommodate multiple modes of traffic: pedestrian, bicycles, transit, automobiles. Encourage two-way streets to the maximum extent feasible.
- On-street parking should be reserved for shoppers and short-term visitors. Long-term parking should be concentrated in parking structures or to the side or rear of principal buildings. Surface parking should be minimized.

Downtown neighborhoods

Downtown neighborhoods are characterized by small lots (approximately 5,000 square feet); two-story houses with porches; consistent building setbacks; and an interconnected grid of narrow, tree-lined streets and alleys. These neighborhoods developed adjacent to the downtown between the 1890s and 1920s.

Design principles:

- Houses should have front porches; setbacks for residential structures should be consistent.
- Recognized historic buildings should be preserved and should be used to guide new development.
- All streets should have sidewalks and should be lined with trees; on-street and rear-access parking should be encouraged.

Traditional neighborhoods

Traditional neighborhoods are characterized by medium-sized lots (5,000-7,000 square feet); one and a half- or two-story houses; consistent building setbacks; and an interconnected grid of narrow, tree-lined streets. These neighborhoods developed between the 1920s and 1940s as the streetcar system expanded outward. Traditional neighborhoods often feature churches, neighborhood schools, and small neighborhood commercial centers.

Design principles:

- All streets should have sidewalks and should be lined with trees. On-street parking should be encouraged; driveways and garages should be located to the side or rear of buildings.
- Neighborhood schools and commercial centers should be preserved.
- Houses should be consistent in terms of front yard setback and bulk.

**Suburban neighborhoods**

Suburban neighborhoods are characterized by large lots (greater than 7,000 square feet), a variety of housing sizes and styles, deep front yard setbacks, wide curvilinear streets, and prominent driveways and garages. These neighborhoods developed after World War II as dependency on the automobile increased.

Design principles:

- New residential development should incorporate traditional neighborhood principles rather than suburban patterns.
- Street improvements within suburban neighborhoods should focus on greater vehicular connection, pedestrian amenities, and reduction of pavement width.

Village centers

Roanoke's traditional neighborhoods typically featured small commercial centers that allowed residents to live, work, and shop in a local setting. Village centers are characterized by a

mixture of high-density uses, including neighborhood-oriented retail, office, and residential uses. Buildings are typically set close to the street and often adjoin each other; parking is located to the side or rear of principal buildings.

Design principles:

- Higher-density residential development should be concentrated within and immediately adjacent to village centers; housing density should decrease with distance away from the village center.
- Buildings should be set close to the street with ground-floor facades that emphasize pedestrian activity.
- Village centers should have broad sidewalks that provide strong pedestrian links into the surrounding neighborhood. Streets and streetscapes should promote pedestrian activity.
- Parking should be located on the street or to the rear or side of principal buildings, and on-street parking should be encouraged.



Local commercial centers

Local commercial centers are intended to serve multiple neighborhoods but generally do not draw customers from a citywide or regional base. These centers are typically located along arterial or collector streets and are characterized by large sites, linear development, deep setbacks, and large expanses of parking. Uses often include grocery stores, restaurants, and small retail shops.

Design principles:

- Local commercial centers should maximize site development through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages.
- Parking lots should have multiple vehicular entrances that are clearly marked and attractively landscaped. Parking lots should have trees located in the interior of the site and along street frontages.
- Visual clutter and excessive lighting should be discouraged. Signs should be consolidated and attractively designed.

Regional commercial centers

Regional commercial centers are intended to serve as retail centers that draw customers from the City and the region. These centers are typically located along arterial roads or interstate highways. They are characterized by large sites with deep setbacks and large expanses of parking. Land uses often include big-box retail stores, shopping malls, national chain restaurants, and entertainment attractions.

Design Principles:

- Regional commercial centers should maximize connectivity with existing collector and arterial streets. Traffic improvements should avoid impact on surrounding neighborhoods. Streets should encourage pedestrian traffic and bicycle lanes.
- Site development should be maximized through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages. Shared parking should be encouraged.
- Parking lots should have multiple vehicular entrances that are clearly marked and attractively landscaped. Parking lots should have trees located in the interior of the site and along street frontages.
- Visual clutter and excessive lighting should be discouraged. Signs should be clustered and attractively designed.

Commercial corridors

Commercial corridors are intended to serve as retail strips for customers from throughout the City and are generally located on arterial roads. They are characterized by linear development on wide roads without bicycle lanes or pedestrian traffic access with excessive signage and curb cuts. Land uses often consist of a variety of business supportive services such as banks, restaurants, furniture stores, and convenience stores, among others.

Design Principles:

- Commercial development should be concentrated at key intersections and should encourage higher-density, mixed-use development and live/work space along the road. Curb cuts should be minimized; shared parking lots and on-street parking should be encouraged.
- Site development should be maximized through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages.
- Visual clutter and excessive lighting should be discouraged. Signs should be attractively designed and co-located on single displays or monuments.

Industrial centers

Industrial centers are intended to serve as employment hubs that attract workers from the City and the region. These centers are typically located along arterial roads or interstate highways. They are characterized by large sites with perimeter fencing, outdoor storage, deep setbacks, and large expanses of parking. These centers sometimes have adjacent land uses that are incompatible and discourage expansion or redevelopment opportunities.

Design Principles:

- Outdoor storage should be shielded from public view, and perimeter fencing should be attractive.
- Site development should be maximized through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages. Shared parking should be encouraged.
- Parking lots should have multiple vehicular entrances that are clearly marked and attractively landscaped. Parking lots should have trees located in the interior of the site and along

street frontages. Connectivity within centers and with existing collector and arterial streets should be encouraged.

- Excessive lighting should be discouraged.

Industrial corridor

Industrial corridors are intended to serve as employment hubs for localities. These centers are typically located along areas that provide convenient transportation access (i.e., railroad, river, arterial road). They are characterized by large sites with deep setbacks, outdoor storage, perimeter fencing, large expanses of parking, and a principal entrance.

Design Principles:

- Outdoor storage should be shielded from public view, and perimeter fencing should be attractive.
- Site development should be maximized through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages. Bicycle lanes, pedestrian traffic, and shared parking should be encouraged.
- Parking lots should have multiple vehicular entrances and have trees located in the interior of the site and along street frontages. Connectivity within centers and with existing collector and arterial streets should be encouraged.
- Excessive lighting should be discouraged.

Streets

Street design principles address the design of new and existing streets and are intended to provide guidance for improvements. These principles are based on discussions of the case studies and research of street design practices. They address eight general elements of the streetscape: automobile accommodations, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, transit accommodations, trees, signs, lighting, and buildings.

Design Principles:

Automobile

- Arterial road designs should encourage tree-lined urban boulevards with attractive pavement and efficient travel lanes.
- Pavement should be kept to the minimum width necessary.
- Narrow vehicle travel lanes should be used to discourage speeding.
- One-way streets should be converted to two-way streets, where possible, to improve access and promote safer speeds.
- On-street parking is desirable on most streets as it provides a buffer between pedestrians and automobile traffic, and it reduces the amount of scarce land dedicated to parking.
- Off-street parking should be located at the side or rear of buildings.
- Textured paving materials should be encouraged, where slower design speeds are desired.
- Access within and adjacent to industrial areas and key business sites should be encouraged.

Bicycles

- Bike lanes should be encouraged. Bike accommodations should be striped or colored lanes on urban collectors, minor arterials, and intermediate arterials.
- Major arterials should have off-road lanes or designated parallel routes.

Pedestrians

- Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of urban residential, urban collector, downtown, and arterial streets. Existing brick sidewalks should be preserved and maintained. Sidewalks should be separated from vehicle travel lanes by street trees and on-street parking.
- Curb return radii should be the minimum necessary as shorter radii reduce street crossing distances for pedestrians.
- Crosswalks in downtown and neighborhood commercial areas should be textured or of colored material.
- Wide streets with multiple lanes such as major arterials should have center medians that create a pedestrian refuge.

Transit

- Commercial centers and village centers should have bus shelters and benches (without advertising).
- Where warranted for safety, pullout areas for buses should be developed.

Trees, Signs, and Lighting

- Trees are an essential element of the streetscape and should be planted along all non-suburban streets. Wherever possible, trees should be planted so that they create a canopy over the roadway.



- Center medians planted with trees should be used on major arterials.
- Planting strips, the area between a curb and a sidewalk, should be used to accommodate street trees. They should be provided on all urban residential access streets, neighborhood collectors, and most arterials.
- Lighting should be decorative and pedestrian-scaled in downtown, commercial centers, and village centers.

- The negative appearance of overhead utility lines should be minimized through relocation to alleys or underground. Where relocation is not feasible, efforts should be made to consolidate lines onto fewer poles.
- Signs (private and public) should be limited in number and scaled in size to minimize visual clutter.

Buildings

- Building location and design should be considered as important elements of the streetscape and should be used to define the street corridor as a public place, especially at major intersections.
- Building height and location should create a feeling of enclosure along a street. Residential and commercial buildings should be located very close to streets with low vehicle speeds. Large public and institutional buildings should generally have deeper setbacks. Building setbacks should be consistent along the street.
- Building fronts and entrances should face a street.
- Major streets should terminate with monumental public/institutional buildings, parks, or civic art.

4.2 IMPLEMENTATION: A PROACTIVE DESIGN WORKSHOP

A design workshop was used to develop concepts and schematics to study alternative development patterns. A similar process is proposed to proactively reach consensus on future development decisions through participation involving stakeholders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Recommendation

- Develop procedures to institutionalize a design workshop aimed at reaching consensus on program and design approaches for proposed projects at the beginning of the development process rather than after extensive funds have been invested in preliminary or final design.

4.3 DESIGN ILLUSTRATIONS AND SCHEMATICS

Design illustrations were developed to study alternative development and design approaches for the following: Village Centers, Housing Clusters, Redeveloping Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites, Downtown Fringe Area, and Streetscapes and Transportation Corridors. The illustrations are schematics to illustrate concepts discussed during the planning process.

Please note that these illustrations are concepts and not public proposals. As such, they do not imply intent on the part of the City or other entity to purchase or develop any of the properties examined.

Village Centers

Many of Roanoke's traditional neighborhoods developed as "villages," with self-contained centers that provided opportunities for people to live, work, shop, play, and interact in a local

setting. Village centers offer amenities typically not found in suburban areas such as convenient access to schools, local shops, and places of employment. Village centers contain higher density residential, retail, entertainment venues, and office-space that contribute to the economic health of Roanoke. Two examples are illustrated: a small pedestrian-oriented, one block center and a larger automobile-oriented center consisting of two to three blocks.



Housing Clusters

Housing clusters are market-rate residential developments consisting of a mixture of residential uses (single-family, two-family, townhouses) on a large site, located within or adjacent to existing developments of established neighborhoods. Smaller than a traditional suburban subdivision but larger than a single lot infill home, housing clusters are partly defined by the ability and willingness of builders to acquire and package land in a developed, urban setting. Two examples are illustrated: Downtown, higher density infill location requiring a single city block site, and development of a traditional neighborhood design planned unit development on a single 50+ acre site.

Redeveloping Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites

Roanoke has a significant amount of commercial and industrially-zoned land that remains vacant or underutilized. These sites are often characterized by a single structure surrounded by large expanses of parking. Two examples are illustrated: Redevelopment of older shopping center with single, large footprint building and redevelopment of an underutilized industrial area with rail access and proximity to major thoroughfares.

Downtown Fringe Area

A prototype site was chosen in the northern portion of the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area (SJRA), known as the "Crossings." This area is located near the intersection of Williamson Road and Albemarle Avenue, just north of the first phase of the SJRA. The intent of the site investigation was to identify uses and improvements that could accelerate the redevelopment process.

This area is typical of other underutilized areas on the fringe of downtown located along rail or highway transportation corridors. Due to deterioration or vacancy, the area has an unattractive façade to passing residents or visitors that represents lost opportunities for job-

and revenue-producing uses. The current land use pattern in this area consists mainly of older industrial and commercial uses and vacant property. The properties are in the flood plain. Rail lines, roadways and the river make the site fragmented.

Streetscapes and Transportation Corridors

A design illustration was developed to show possible improvements to an existing four-lane roadway. Additional designs and road cross-sections will be developed as part of the Street Design Guidelines.

SMALL VILLAGE/NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Function: The center serves the immediate neighborhood. It is located on a major thoroughfare. The center may contain neighborhood-serving commercial and office spaces such as a gas station/convenience store, small shops, and offices.

Scale: The village center is one block in length. Commercial and office uses are located on both sides of the street. The surrounding neighborhood is primarily two- to three-story residential single-family houses. Apartments will be located in converted older homes.

Design Schematic: Small Village/Neighborhood Center.

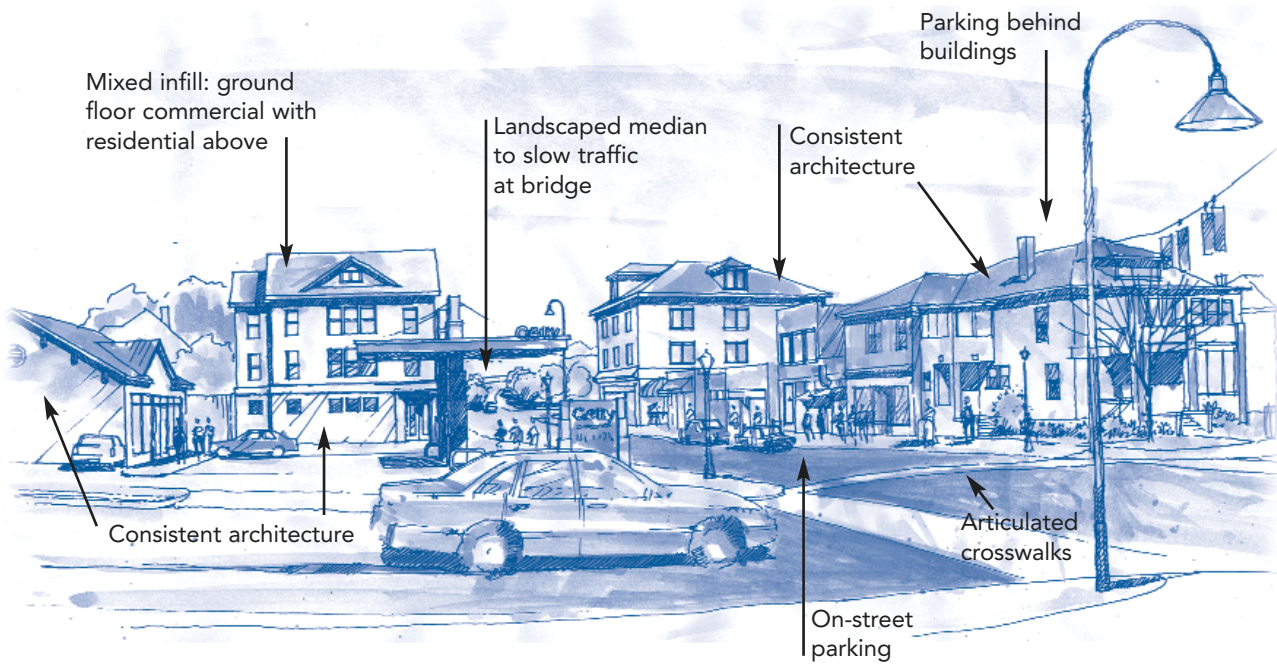
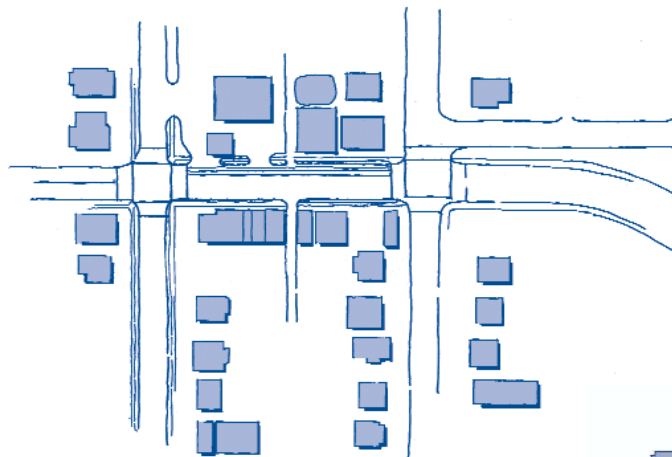
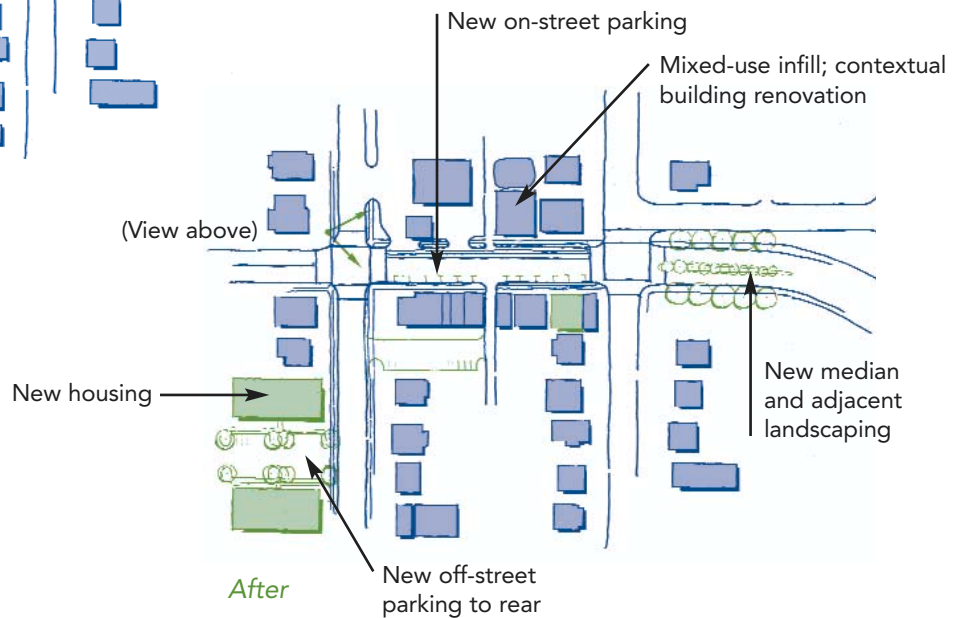
Land Uses: Existing buildings are renovated, and new mixed-use infill is added within the block to permit retail on the first floor with office and commercial uses on the second and third levels.

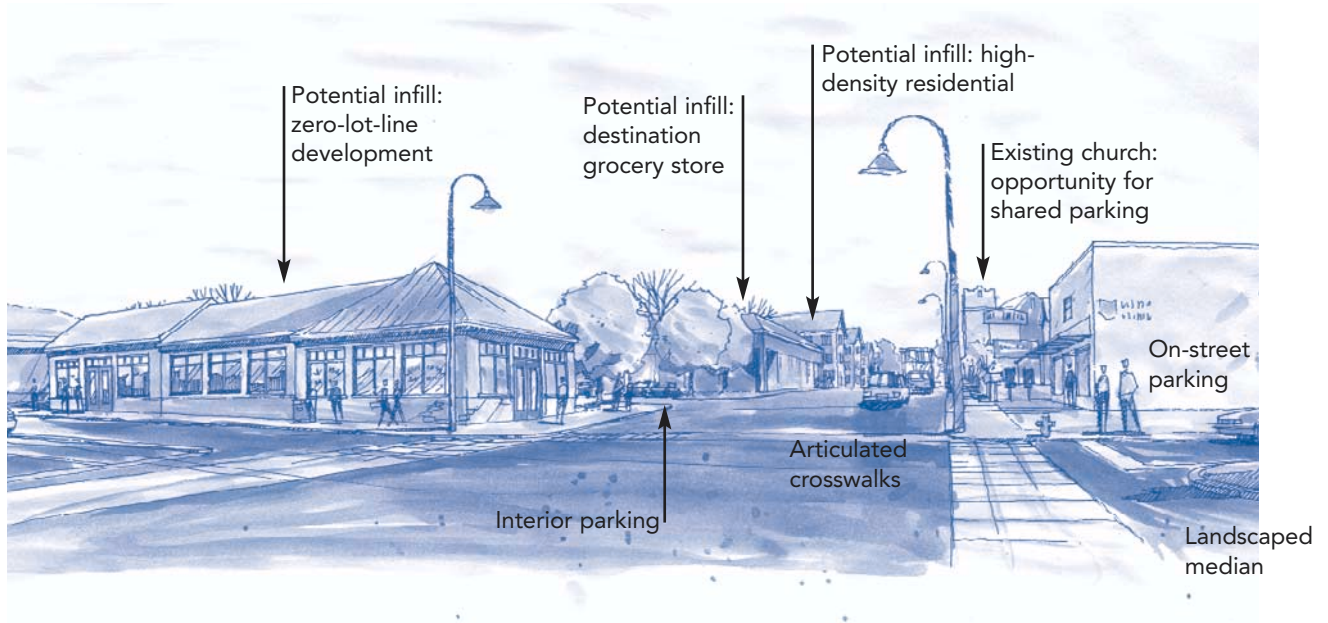
Traffic: On-street parking is added during off-peak hours. An articulated crosswalk in brick identifies the area as "pedestrian friendly" and is a reminder to motorists to slow their speed.

Parking: Off-street parking is added to the rear of the buildings. The parking is paved and well lighted. Retail stores have rear entrances to encourage patrons to utilize the parking lots.

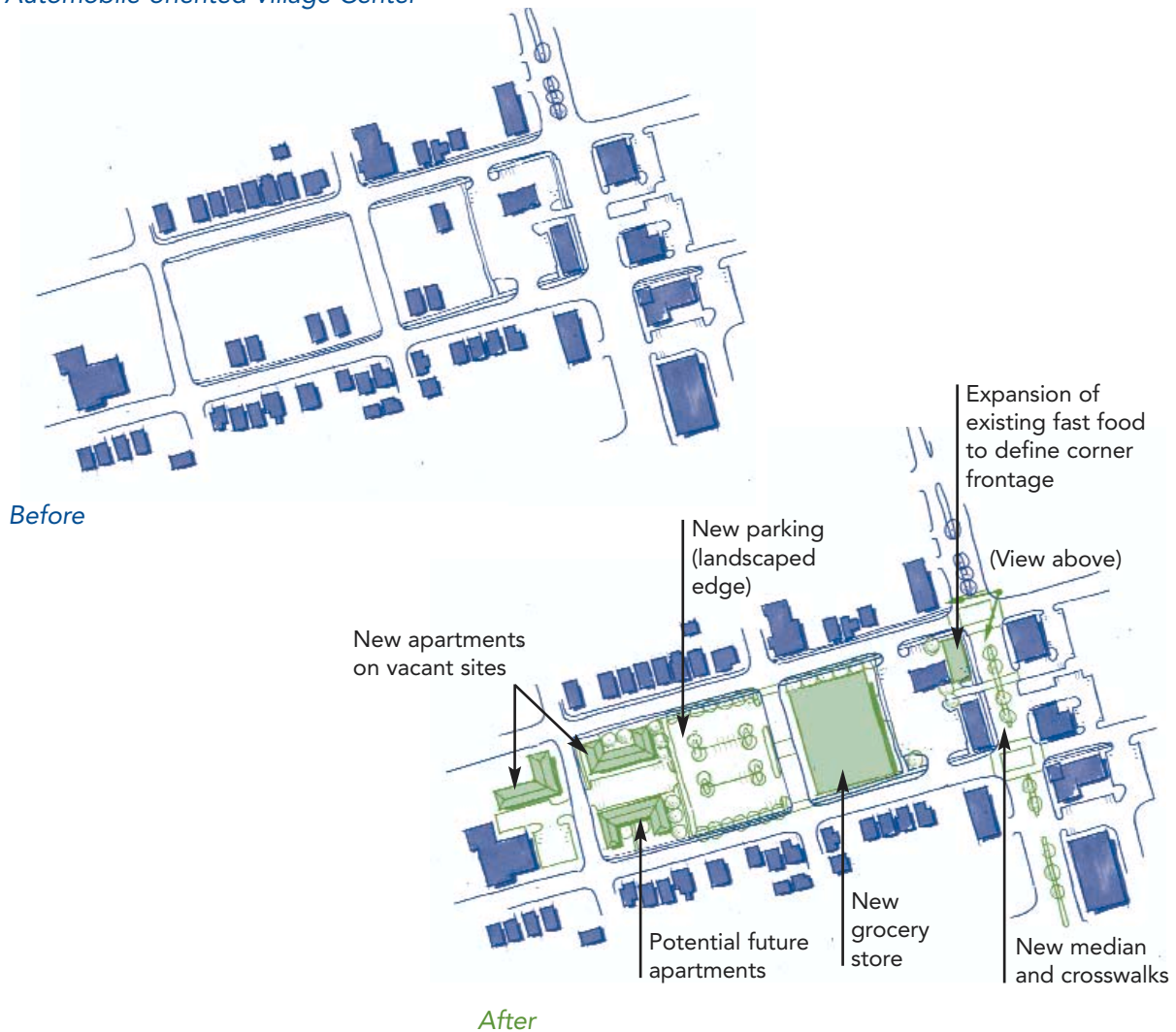
Buildings: New buildings in the village center are not set back and must have 75% glass on the first floor to create visual attractiveness. Awnings, canopies, and other façade improvements are encouraged for existing buildings. Residential uses are permitted on the second floor of the commercial buildings.

Streetscape: An area identity is created by careful use of plant materials, lighting, street furniture, and signage.

*Small Village/Neighborhood Center**Before**After*



Automobile-oriented Village Center



AUTOMOBILE-ORIENTED VILLAGE CENTER

Function: The center is located on a major corridor that carries local and commuter traffic. The center serves both the immediate neighborhood and surrounding community. The center may contain larger scale commercial uses such as a drug store, grocery store, or fast food restaurants. Institutional uses may include churches or other public buildings such as a firehouse or community center.

Scale: The center is two to three blocks in length and may include some uses on the first block of the side streets. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of two- and two and a half-story residential buildings.

Design Schematic: Automobile-Oriented Village Center

Land Uses: Existing buildings are renovated, and new mixed-use infill is added within the block to permit retail and office uses. Residential uses at a higher density than the surrounding neighborhood (two- to three-story apartments) are suggested adjacent to the central commercial area. In this schematic, a grocery store that draws its market from outside the neighborhood is illustrated as a destination store that can support other merchants.

Traffic: On-street parking on arterial streets is not permitted. Articulated crosswalks in brick identify the area as "pedestrian friendly" and are a reminder to motorists to slow their speed in the commercial area.

Parking: Off-street parking is located on the side and at the rear of buildings shielded from the street by landscaping or low walls.

Buildings: New buildings are added to fill vacant spaces or expanses of surface parking. Buildings should not be set back and must have 60% glass on the first floor to create visual attractiveness. Awnings, canopies, and other façade improvements are encouraged for existing buildings.

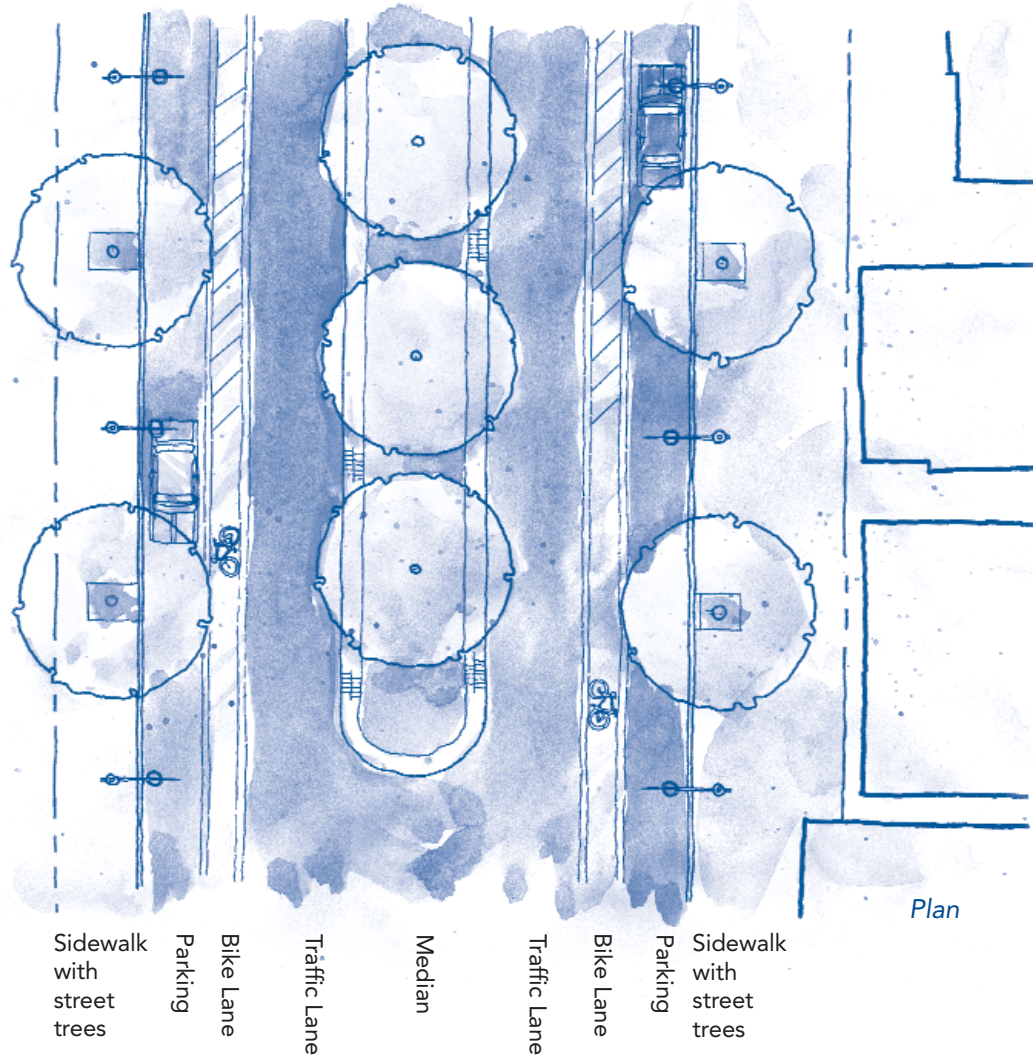
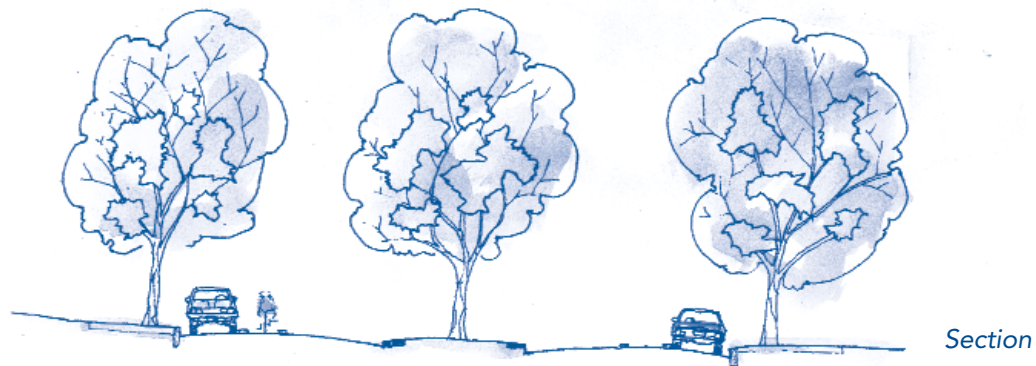
Streetscape: An area identity is created by careful use of plant materials, lighting, street furniture, and signage.

URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTOR STREET

Design Schematic: The design schematic illustrates the reconfiguration of a typical four-lane collector street to an urban boulevard.

An extended median is constructed between cross streets. The median is of sufficient width to permit planting street trees. A sidewalk and parking lanes are added on each side of the street. A single travel lane allows the steady movement of vehicles. Parking can be limited during commuter hours if required. Stamped/colored pavement delineates bicycle lanes between each travel lane and the median. Mid-block crosswalks are articulated with brick or stamped pavement. Appropriate street lighting and signage complete the design.





Urban Neighborhood Collector Street

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN: LARGE SITE

Function: The Traditional Neighborhood Design provides for a variety of single- and multi-family housing with supporting non-residential uses within a single planned development.

Scale: This design requires a large site (greater than 50 acres). The overall net density will range from 4 to 24 dwelling units per acre depending on the character of the community in which it is located; limits are set by the land use and location policies of the plan.

Design Schematic: Traditional Neighborhood Design

Land Uses: A mix of single family detached, duplex, single family attached, and multi-family dwelling units. Higher density residential development should be located adjacent to the village center including apartments above shops. Compatible governmental, religious, recreational, and other uses required to support the residents of the new and surrounding area are encouraged. Neighborhood service, commercial, retail, and office uses should be located in the village center.

Open space such as neighborhood and community parks, greenways, and trails should be developed. Greenways should be connected to the surrounding neighborhoods.

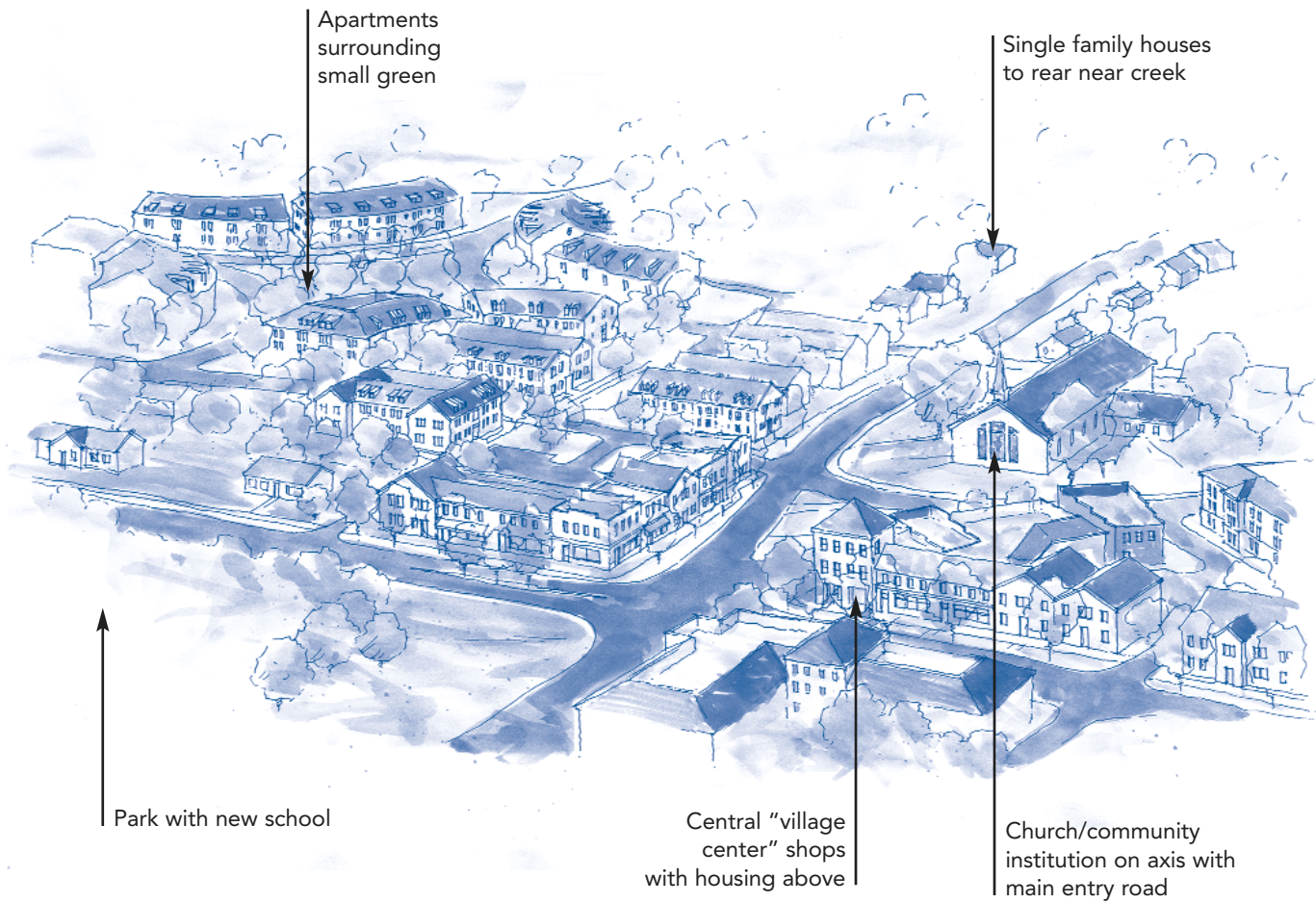
Roadways: Principal access points should be designed to encourage smooth traffic flow at a pedestrian-friendly speed. Where possible, neighborhood streets should connect with existing neighborhood streets to complete the street grid pattern of the surrounding area.

Parking: Parking in the village center should be located at the rear of the buildings or in a screened parking area.

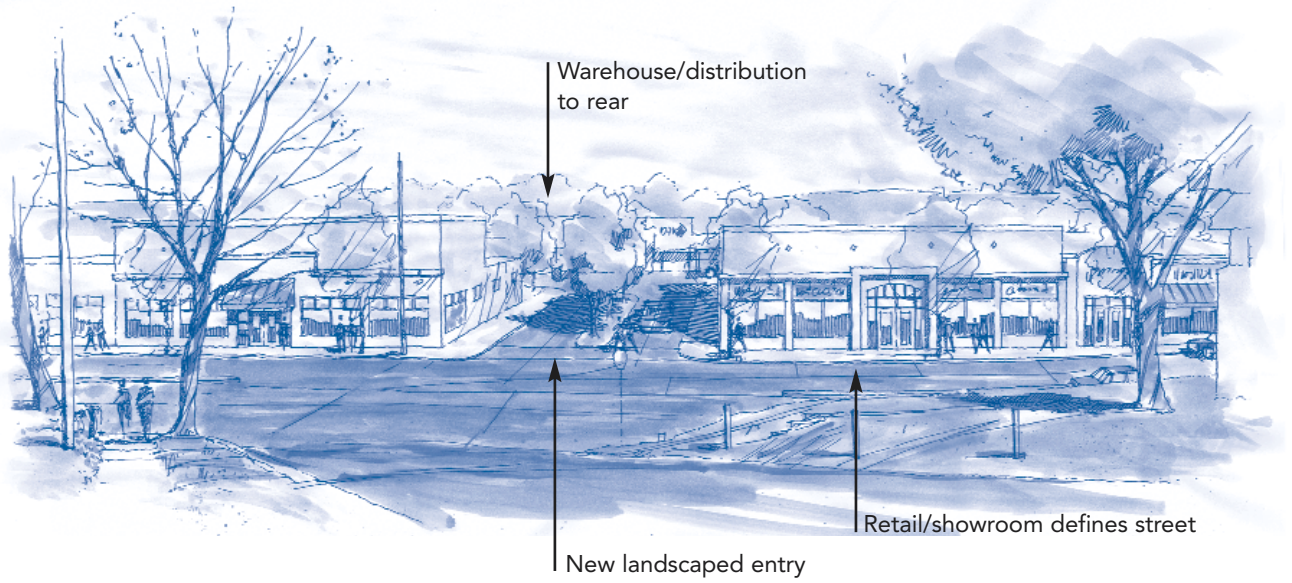
Streetscape: Higher density structures should be built to the building line with parking located in the rear or in parking areas. Single-family attached and detached structures should be built not more than 10 feet set back from the edge of the sidewalk, with parking located in the rear. Where possible, alleys should be created to serve rear access garages and parking areas.

An area identity is created by careful use of plant materials, lighting, street furniture, and signage.

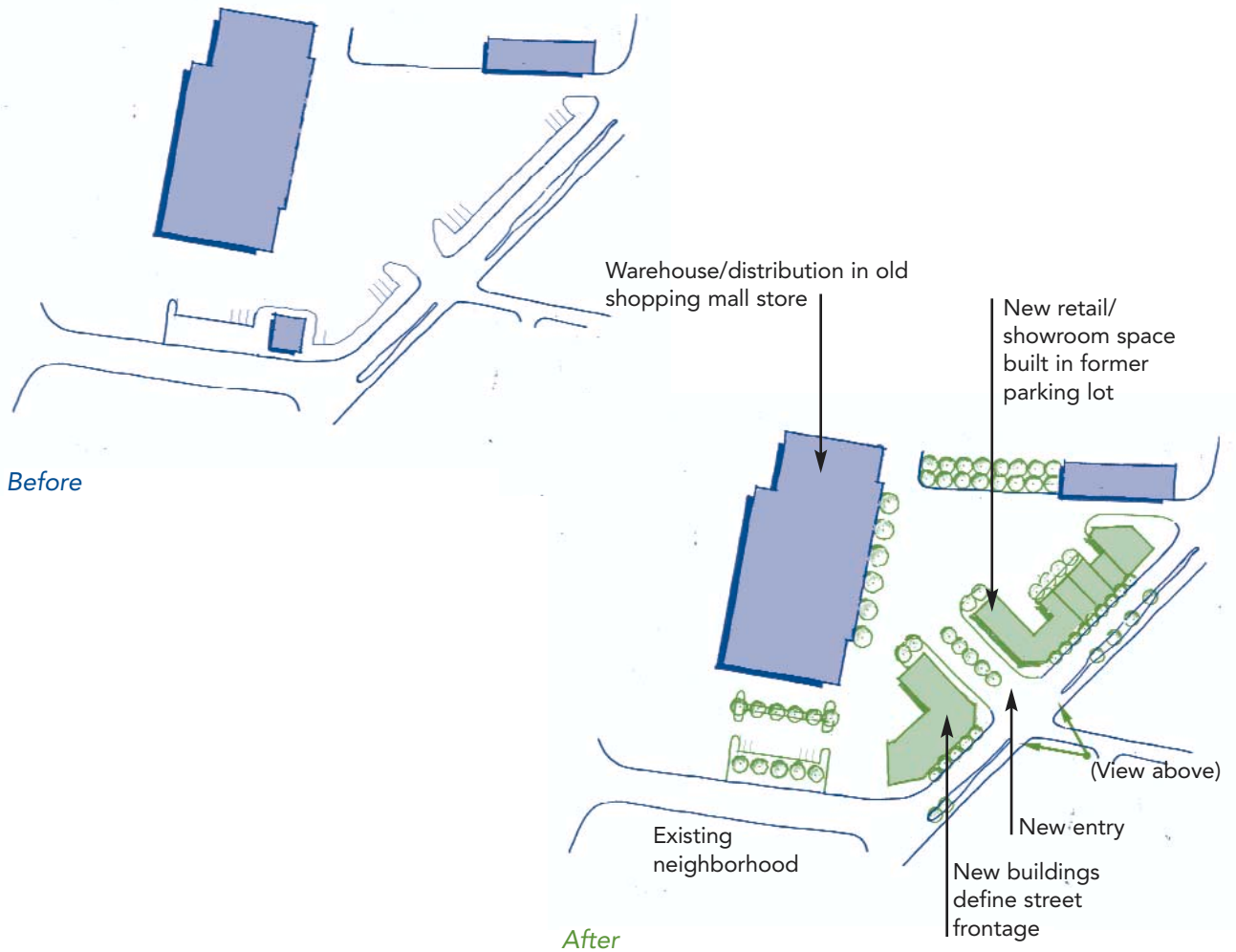
Other features: Yards, fences, walls, or vegetative screening at the edge of the neighborhood should be provided to screen residential areas from undesirable views, lighting, noise, or other off-site impacts.



Traditional Neighborhood Design: Large Site



Reuse of Older Commercial Center



REUSE OF OLDER COMMERCIAL CENTER

Function: Site is a 2- to 10-acre parcel zoned commercial, located on a major thoroughfare. Primary access will be from main road. The current use may be retail, or the site may be vacant.

Scale: Single large existing structure. Building may have been divided between tenants (grocery, drug store). Building is single footprint, with loading docks in the rear. Parking is located at the front of the building, with building set back from the road to the rear of the lot.

Design Schematic: Reuse of Older Commercial Center

Land Uses: Site is rezoned to permit mixture of commercial and light industrial uses such as distribution, warehousing, and retail space.

New infill buildings are added along street frontage to provide showroom, retail, and/or office space. Residential uses are not relevant in this example, although they could be considered as second-level space in other situations.

Traffic: Impact on surrounding neighborhood area is minimized by limiting access to the site from main roadways. Sidewalks are added along the main frontage of the site with articulated crosswalks in colored pavers at the entrance to the parking area.

Parking: Off-street parking is provided on site. Landscaping along building edges may be used to offset requirements for landscaping on paved parking area. Maximum parking requirements will reduce amount of parking; parking requirements will be calculated by use; shared on-site parking is permitted.

Buildings: New buildings along property line will be a minimum of two stories in height, will not be set back from front building line, and must have 50% glass on the first floor to create visual attractiveness. Awnings, canopies, and other façade improvements are encouraged on buildings along street frontage.

Streetscape: Landscaping along the street frontage will be limited to street trees planted in the planting strip along the road frontage.

REDEVELOPMENT OF UNDERUTILIZED INDUSTRIAL AREA

Function: The area is currently used for industrial purposes, located on a major arterial with easy access to I-81, I-581/Route 220, or major east/west corridors, although existing widths vary between two and four lanes creating bottlenecks. The industrial area was developed over the past 50 years, and many of the buildings are now vacant or underutilized. Residential areas or small lot commercial uses are often interspersed within the industrial areas limiting their functionality.

Scale: The area is linear, less than a mile in length. Adjacent uses outside of the corridor are single and multi-family residential and commercial services. Retail is frequently limited to convenience stores, gas stations, and auto-related uses.

Design Schematic: Redevelopment of Underutilized Industrial Area

Land Uses: Existing industrial buildings and sites should continue to be used for heavy to light industry. Residential areas should be relocated over time, the land assembled and rezoned, and new industrial or research and development uses located in the area.

Traffic: Roadways should be improved to thoroughfares (four lane). Public transit service should be provided. New roads may need to be constructed or upgraded for intra-site access.





Parking: Parking is provided on site, buffered from surrounding neighborhood.

Buildings: New buildings will be developed to meet industrial, flex space, and research and development requirements and take advantage of rail opportunities where they exist.



Streetscape: Landscaping along main thoroughfares is required. Greenways and pedestrian linkages should be provided to connect the employment areas with residential or recreational areas.

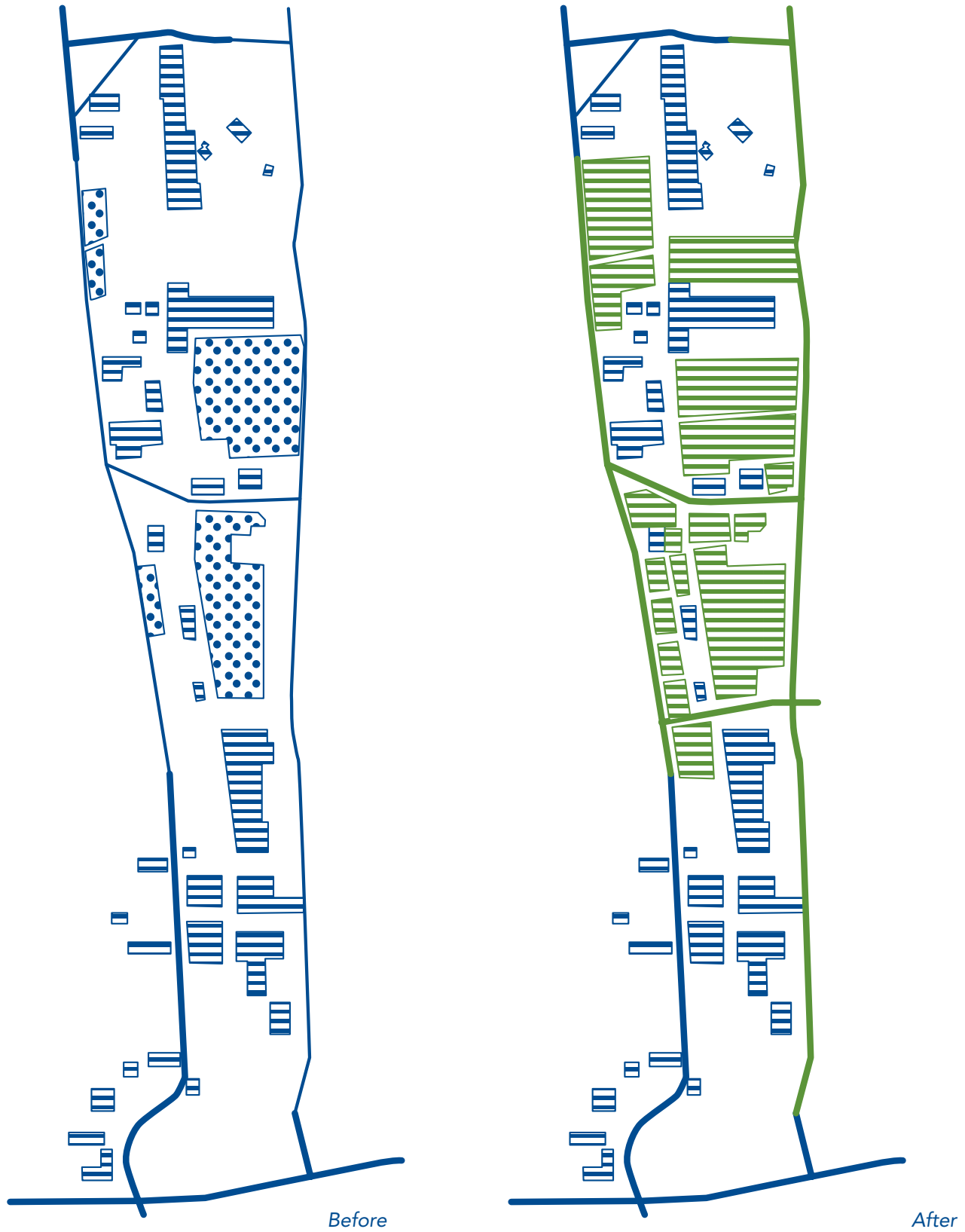
Redevelopment of Underutilized Industrial Area

Before

-  Existing Two-lane Road
-  Existing Four-lane Road
-  Existing Residential
-  Existing Industrial

After

-  Proposed Four-lane Road
-  Proposed Industrial



Redevelopment of Underutilized Industrial Area

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT: NORTHERN PORTION OF THE SOUTH JEFFERSON REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The chosen prototype site was the northern portion of the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area (SJRA), known as the "Crossings." This area is located near the intersection of Williamson Road and Albemarle Avenue, just north of the first phase of the SJRA. The intent of the site investigation was to identify uses and improvements that could accelerate the redevelopment process.

Function: This area is typical of other underutilized areas on the southern edge of downtown located along rail or highway transportation corridors. Due to deterioration or vacancy, the area has an unattractive façade to passing residents or visitors that represents lost opportunities for job and revenue-producing uses.

Scale: The current land use pattern in this area consists mainly of older industrial uses (such as manufacturing and warehousing), commercial uses (such as automotive and furniture), and vacant property. The properties are in the flood plain. Rail lines, roadways, and the river make the site fragmented.

Design Schematic

Land Uses: Land uses considered for this area should be developed for business support services such as hotel, grocery store, and restaurant. Shown is a new hotel built in conjunction with renovation of adjacent loft buildings. Area across the railroad track could be used for recreational purposes (i.e. park), with new or renovated buildings containing parking on ground floors in flood plain areas and loft residential uses and live-work space in upper floors.

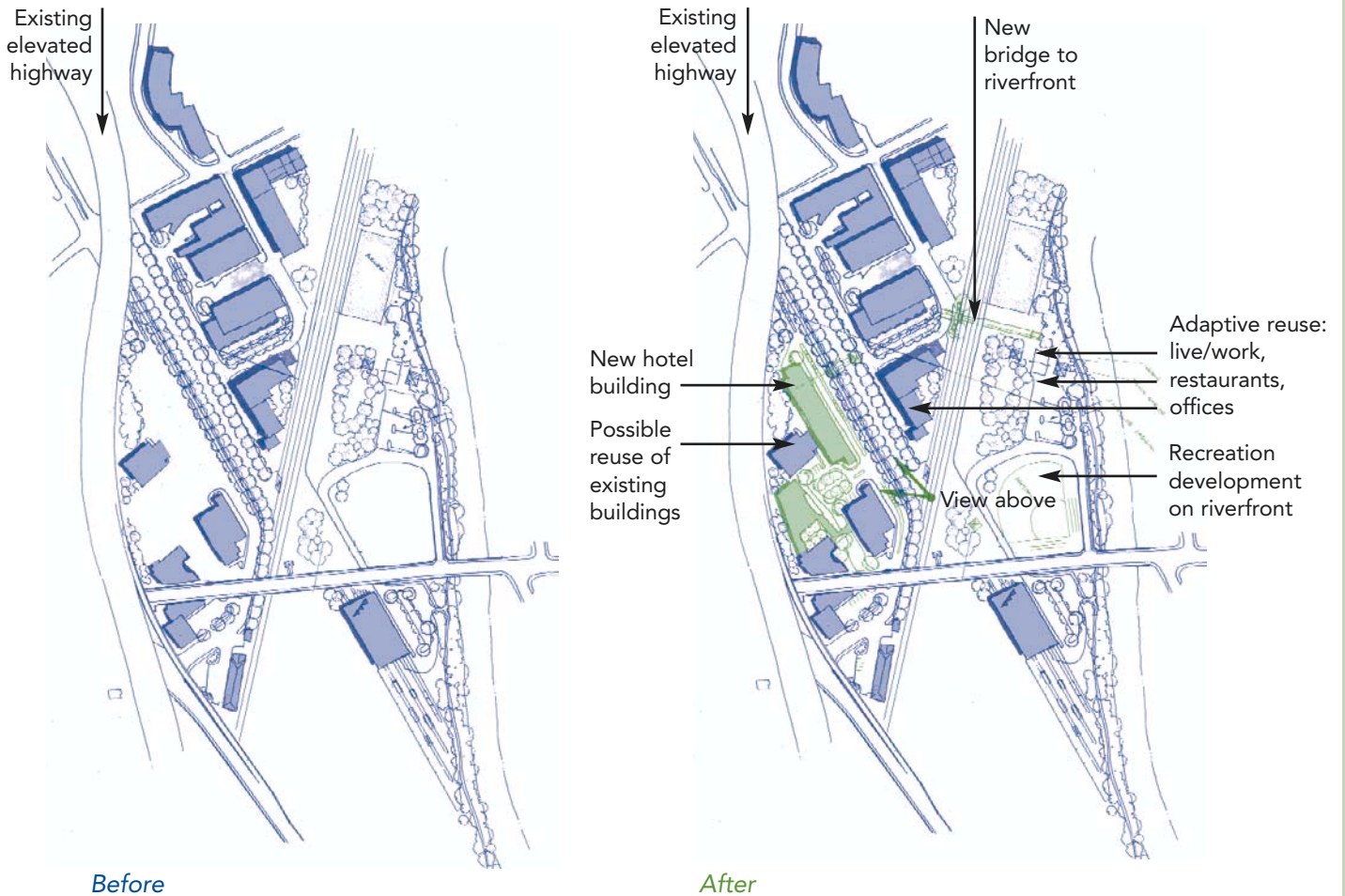
Parking: Parking will be provided on site, screened from view by landscaping or located in interior courtyards.

Buildings: Second-level restaurants or clubs in this area could feature outdoor decks overlooking the river; such development would result in a mixed-use community with a 24-hour residential presence that would bring vitality to a key area near the downtown that is currently a partially-abandoned and underutilized area.

Streetscape: A walkway along the riverfront will connect to the downtown and the SJRA.



Downtown Development



DOWNTOWN HOUSING CLUSTER

Function: The site is a single square city block currently containing one or more underutilized structures. The current uses may include residential or office.

Scale: The area is adjacent to the downtown. A mix of two-, three-, and four-story multi-family and commercial buildings are adjacent to the site.

Downtown Housing Cluster – Infill

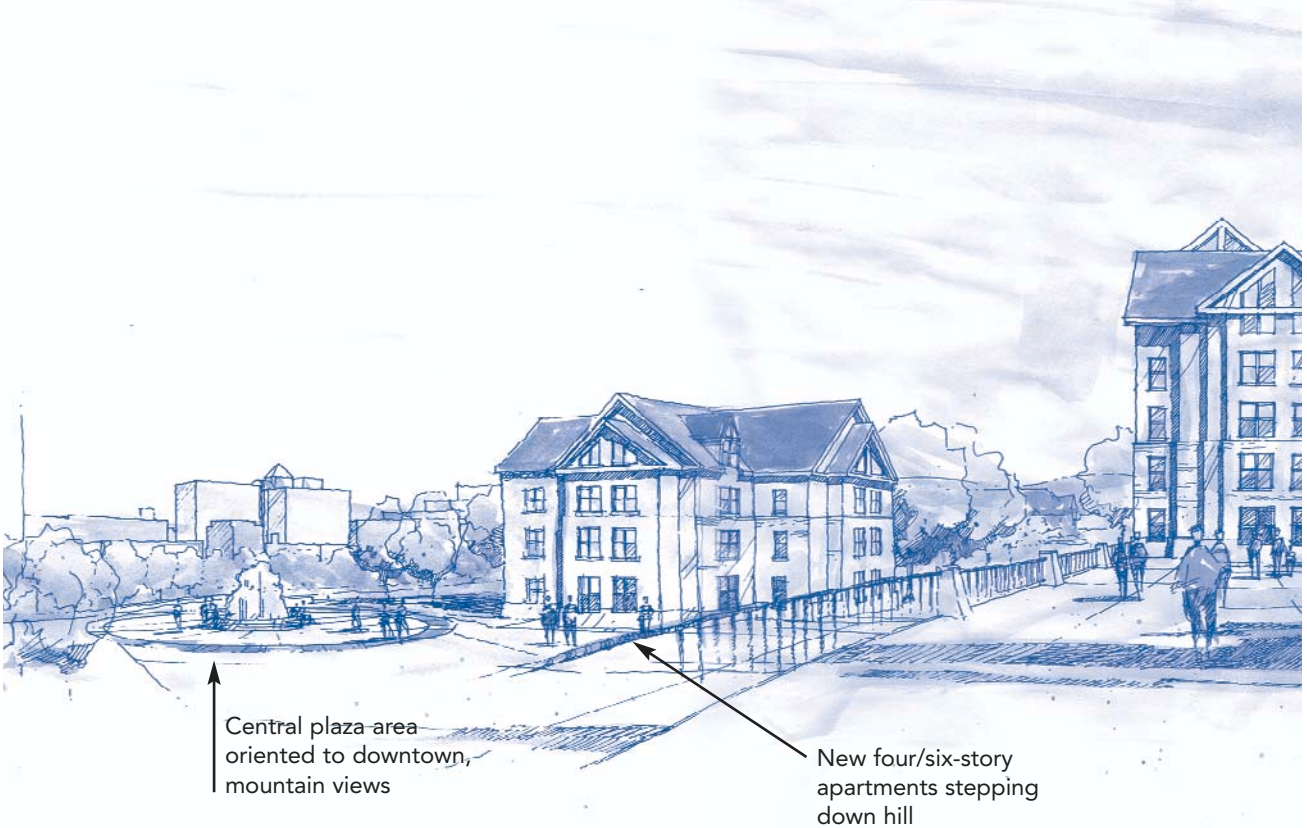
Land Uses: Existing buildings are purchased and removed in order to assemble a feasible development site. New four- to five-story structures are added. A mix of uses including residential (multi-family), office, and retail would be permitted.

Traffic: Access to site would be provided from side street to minimize impact.

Parking: Off-street parking could be added by underground garage, taking advantage of topography, or in courtyards.

Buildings: Buildings will be constructed with minimal setbacks, providing private courtyard space in the center of the development. The scale and density of the development may serve as a transition between downtown (taller buildings, high density) and adjacent neighborhood (detached houses, medium density).

Streetscape: Pedestrian access is encouraged by careful use of street trees and lighting. Crosswalks linking the development with the downtown will encourage pedestrian activity.



Downtown Housing Cluster



NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

In recent years, Roanoke has aggressively promoted the development of neighborhood plans to guide the future of neighborhoods and link their development with the City's comprehensive plan. Detailed neighborhood plans are developed using an intensive citizen participation process. Plans are strategic and emphasize public-private partnerships to implement key recommendations. Neighborhood plans are used by the City and by neighborhood groups to make decisions on resolving issues, implementing specific projects, and guiding future development and public investment.